

The Short Circuit

<http://www.avarc.av.org>



The official publication of the Antelope Valley Amateur Radio Club

May 2008

President's Corner

Jon Clark N6NQ

What a great bunch people hams are!

I was recently working with "Ham Radio Deluxe". My primary interest was to explore its remote control abilities. While reading up on its features I became intrigued by the features that were described in the section about its new DM780 "Digital Modes" component. So now I'm totally sucked in. I've got to try this thing out.

I listen around 7070 and find PSK activity. After decoding a couple of QSOs, I decide to throw out a CQ. Two quick CQs and I've got a contact. The first ham is from Bath, Ontario near the lake. He turns out to be a long time user of "Ham Radio Deluxe" and we chat about its use for a short time. As he signs off, another fellow jumps right in and gives me a call. This time it's Jay N4NUI. He starts by complementing my strong signal and explains how it appears on his waterfall. After a little bit of chat about this, I'm starting to read between the lines a little and I see that Jay is really telling me (in the nicest way possible) that I'm overdriving my rig with the audio from my sound card. So we work our way around that subject, I make a few adjustments, cleaning up my signal to some degree and we sign off.

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UNITED WE STAND

Meeting Notice

Thursday, May 1, at 7:30 pm, will be the next meeting of AVARC, in the Primrose Room of the Larry Chimbole Center in Palmdale. Talk-in is available on 146.73 MHz. if you need directions.

This month's meeting will feature a presentation on D-STAR by **Ken Chafin W6CPA**. This should be a great opportunity to learn about this new system of digital voice and data communication, so mark your calendars and be sure to join us!



Ken Chafin W6CPA



From the Secretary's Desk

AVARC General Meeting 3 April 2008

Opening: John Clark N6NQ called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. and proceeded with the Flag Salute. Next were introductions and roll call. Thirty-eight individuals participated. Several individuals expressed interest in obtaining their licenses.

A motion was made to accept the March **meeting minutes** as published in the newsletter. Motion approved and minutes accepted.

Treasurer Don Jackson K6GET was unable to attend and sent his apologies. Jon presented the **Treasurers report:** current funds: \$4,864.98. Club is waiting on details from the bank regarding changing the account signatures.

Old business:

Field Day: Margie Hoffman KG6TBR reviewed the Field Day plans. Event scheduled for 28 and 29 June. Margie reviewed the site plan. Website has pictures of the fun from last year. Club will start setting up at noon on Friday – you are welcome to join!

CW Net: In process.

New Business:

M2: Open House scheduled for April 12th in Fresno. It is a good place to buy an antenna. Bring cash!

DX convention: The Visalia event will be held April 24 – 27. www.dxconvention.org.

Don Moore W6DMM: Many of us remember prior club member W6DMM well. Dick Miller KJ6W indicated Don has contracted Lou Gehrig's disease. If you wish to reach Don, Jon Clark has his contact information.

VE Session: Next session, a GLAARG, is scheduled for 7 April, 7 pm at the church.

AV Ham Swap meet: Don KI6KVR discussed the option of having a bi-

monthly AV Ham swap meet. Please contact Don at 626 664-5736 with your input. Need a venue.

Baker to Vegas: Eugene KG6SLC. Baker to Vegas is a law enforcement relay race held April 19-20. Our club will man stage 15. A coordination meeting will be held at Eugene's house Thursday, 10 April, at 6:00 pm. Talk-in available.

New CW Keys: Chuck AF6GT shared his homemade CW keys.

NUE-PSK digital modem: James N5GU1 will be sharing one of the original PSK digital modems at the May 1 meeting. (See March issue of QST for an article on the device.)

Break ** Refreshments **** Sale of raffle tickets for the evening 50/50 *****

Presentation:

Dick Miller KJ6W took the club back to the past with an excellent presentation on the history of local repeaters. The first California repeater, K6GW, was installed in 1952. The first repeater in Southern California, K6MYK, raised its antenna on Mt Lee above the Hollywood sign in 1957. Our beloved Hauser made its debut in 1964. Dick regaled us with stories of antennas dropping 50 lb chunks of ice after heavy storms and steep lama helicopter dives transporting equipment to remote mountain tops. Thank you Dick for the excellent, informative presentation—and for the use of the repeater!

Raffle: The 50/50 raffle was conducted. The alarm clock was won by Gary Barr WA6TWT. The raffle (\$22) was won by Doris Karabinus. WA6LLC.

The meeting concluded at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Humpherys KI6DWE
AVARC Secretary 2008

Swap Shop

RADIOS FOR SALE

Marine VHF XCVR—Icom IC-M120, new in box with marine antenna. \$150 or trade for ?

Ten-Tec 2 KW antenna tuner, like new. \$200 or trade for ?

Guitar—Epiphone Emperor II Joe Pass model, new in new factory case. \$500 or trade for ?

Call KB6R on Hauser

TOWER FOR SALE

This is a three section, 51 foot, medium duty, self supporting, crank-up tower. It does require a concrete base to anchor the tower. It is hot-dipped, galvanized steel construction. It comes with the fixed base, with reinforced rebar to be placed into the concrete base. A detailed mechanical drawing of the tower can be viewed at: <http://www.tashtowers.com/crankup.html>
Asking \$800. Bill W2WHC bcrews56@verizon.net or 661-816-9115

For Sale: HEIL Handi Mic, model HM-5 Compact Microphone. Pre-wired for Kenwood radios with modular RJ-15 type connector. Could be used with most other rigs, (except ICOM), if a different plug is wired on. Brand new in the box. \$65.00.

Motorola Spectrum VHF Mobile VHF antennas. 5/8 wave, high-quality commercial-grade units made in the USA. These will work for 2-meters. Includes RADIALL/LARSEN NMO thru-hole mounts and coax kits. New in shipping tubes. \$25.00 each.

Contact Dan Sherwood, WA6PZK at (661) 264-1863.

President's Corner...

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Later that night I receive an email from Jay. He explains his experience with PSK and other digital modes. He explains that in the early days everyone was very concerned about their signals and worked to see that they were sending the best signals they could. Now days he frequently sees newbies come on the band with too much power and too much drive and no idea of how much bandwidth they are inadvertently using. That sounds familiar.

He finished his email with a little more treatment of station set up for good PSK signals.

Now let's look back at this for a minute. There I was behaving like an ignorant newbie (because I was/am) and needlessly gobbling up 10-20kHz of bandwidth. Rather than getting yelled at, I get a very nice QSO that starts to lead me in the right direction. Then I get a nice email with more information/education and never once did I feel that I was being criticized or insulted.

Knowing that I had tapped into a goldmine of good experience and information, I replied with thanks and questions. The response to the questions was even more informative and Jay took the opportunity to explain his experiences with a few other digital modes and offered encouragement to try and enjoy those modes as well. We have exchanged a few emails now and I think that my next excursion into the PSK window will be much more pleasant for those around me.

So here are a few lessons I've taken away from this experience:

Trying a new mode? Read up on it. Especially anything you can find about the actual mechanics of using your equipment to perform this mode.

Watch some people operate the mode for awhile. You will learn a lot about the



mode and after a bit, you may be able to spot the experienced operators. Both by their signals and the subjects they chat about. Make note of these good operators.

If you can, try to make your first QSO with one of these ops. Tell them you're a newbie. Ask them about your signal and what you can do to improve it if it's not right. Since you've been selective about whom you've asked these questions, chances are good that you will receive informative, useful replies.

Show your appreciation for the time and experience you are benefiting from. You will likely be repayed with more time and information. Who knows, maybe after a little bit, you'll have a new friend that you'll want to meet at a convention someday.

Now I realize that not every ham is like N4NUI, but I believe that most that have taken the time to really learn a mode would be very happy to help and encourage a newbie into becoming a better operator.

If you see N4NUI on the waterfall, I encourage you to make contact. You should enjoy the QSO.

(I'll be asking Jay's permission to reprint some of his email about PSK setup. It is good info for first time PSK ops.)

73,

Jon N6NQ

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